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Testimony

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State Senator Tony Boucher
State Representative John Frey

On December 8th, 2013 it became necessary for me to call the Ridgefield Police Department to help me with my son. That night he was hitting me in the head, kicking my legs and beating at my arms. He had reached a point where his weight and strength were beyond anything I could control. I was scared for his safety, my 17 year olds safety, and my own ability to continue living in this unbelievable nightmare. Three days later in a fit of rage, he mistakenly closed my hand in a door. The consequences were dramatic and I subsequently endured two hand surgeries.

Bryce has Fragile X Syndrome. Fragile X is a profound developmental disability that includes intellectual impairment, language impairment, and behavioral difficulties. My son will never live an independent life. He will always need 24 hour a day care. We have known this fact since he was diagnosed at the age of two.

For the last two years he was living at home Bryce became increasingly violent and aggressive toward me. If we had not had the funds to be able to move him into a CRS managed by Ability Beyond I am certain that I, or my younger son would have been (at the very least), critically hurt.

People with severe challenges are often viewed in a negative light. We are sometimes afraid of what we don't understand and we are slow to realize that everyone has something to offer his or her community. Everyone has a need to be connected and know they belong. Bryce has taught so many other children and their families, that inclusion has a positive affect on all of us. Learning to accept others who are different from us creates a society that is forgiving, kind, caring, and peaceful.

When Bryce is at Foundation High School, living in his CRS on Longmeadow Lane in Bethel, CT, out in the community, or engaged in activities, he is social, happy, empathic and engaging. He is loved by his school and the staff at Longmeadow Lane. Everyone that works with him sees his potential, and knows that with the right guidance and support he will be successful in his life.

If the funding is cut for young men like Bryce the consequences will be beyond anything you can even imagine. There are hundreds of families living with children they adore but can no longer care for adequately. People with disabilities like Bryce are unable to manage their anxiety. They live with fear and apprehension. They cannot process the typical expectations we all can easily comprehend. They face challenges in their every day lives that most people don't even know exist.

Why does Governor Malloy want to make their lives more difficult? How can he not understand that compromising their lives now will require much more funding in the future? People who are intellectually and developmentally challenged have so much to teach us and so much to offer our communities. If we can't support them financially how will they learn, grow, and join us in our increasingly demanding typical world?

Without the initial funding for the DDS VSP program Bryce would not have been considered for placement in a CRS. Without Lisa Just's excellent case management at DDS and Ability Beyond housing, staffing and support, our family would be facing ongoing trauma and challenges we could not possibly meet.

PLEASE listen to our story and all the stories of families like ours. Our children's lives are precious and they cannot survive without financial support from our government.

I voted for Dannel Malloy. I supported him when he needed me too. I am now expecting the same support in return.